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OGC 70-1533

3 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Military Procurement Authorization Act

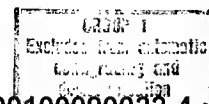
1. On 3 September 1970, Brig. Gen. James F. Lawrence, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense; Maurice H. Lanman, Assistant General Counsel (Fiscal Matters), Department of Defense; Mr. Maury and I met with John R. Blandford, Chief Counsel, House Armed Services Committee, to discuss the Senate amendments to the Military Procurement Authorization bill which would affect military expenditures in Southeast Asia.

2. Mr. Blandford indicated there was a possibility of an impasse at the conference between the House and Senate representatives, so that no bill would be enacted. Mr. Lanman said that even though there was a continuing resolution this would cause him problems on matters other than the Southeast Asian expenditures. Mr. Blandford said what was really going on was that the House Armed Services Committee had succeeded in re-establishing its jurisdiction over the war in Southeast Asia and over the Central Intelligence Agency and that what Senator Fulbright was trying to do by his amendments was to obtain control in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Blandford said the House conferees would not accept any of the Fulbright proposals.

3. Mr. Blandford went on to state some of his own views, which included the premise that our sole aim at the present time is to get our troops out of Southeast Asia while Vietnamizing the war and presumably standing by the Saigon government if the war should end. He felt we had no role in supporting governments in

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Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. He further felt that Thailand had sufficient money to fight its own wars and we should not be paying them for assisting in fighting that was in their own interest. However, he recognized this might not be possible, and we pointed out that the Fulbright amendment as it now stood specifically barred assistance to Thais to fight in Laos. After discussion of different ways of coping with this, Mr. Blandford suggested adding the following language to the Fulbright amendment:

" . . . unless such funds are designed for use in support of the withdrawal of U. S. forces in South Vietnam, "

or some variant thereof. It was agreed this language would probably be acceptable to Senator Stennis and might be hard to oppose. Whether it gains sufficient leeway for future planned programs was something we would have to look into.

4. Mr. Lanman is preparing a paper for Mr. Blandford commenting on all the Senate amendments and presenting a DoD position and will include a position on the above or similar language. Incidentally, it is very close to language Mr. Lanman had previously drafted on his own as the only solution he could find to the problem. It does give the basis for an argument that CIA-supported activities in Laos not only tie down large numbers of North Vietnamese but also are aimed at interdiction in the Trail so that could be considered in support of the withdrawal of U. S. troops from Vietnam and the Vietnamization of the war.

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A next step might be to discuss our progress in this language with the Chairmen of the CIA Subcommittees to see if they would support the position that our activities came within the language. Also, if DoD comes to the conclusion that its language would authorize the expenditure of DoD funds, it should be encouraged to fund the activities directly.

5. Mr. Blandford indicated that at the present time it looked as if the conference would take place sometime during the first two weeks of October.

[Redacted]

LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON  
General Counsel

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"Military Procurement Authorization Act"

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